DARK HORSE COMICS

$3.50

THE GOON™ #37

by
Eric Powell

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The nameless man, the zombie priest, had come to town to build a gang from the undead. But even the undead fear…

THE GOON™

by Eric Powell

colors by Dave Stewart

editor **Scott Allie** assistant editor **Daniel Chabon** designer **Amy Arendts**

publisher **Mike Richardson**

SINCE 1999

Zombies provided by **Jethro and Earl Zombie Wranglerin' Inc.**

and **The Adopt-A-Zombie Foundation**

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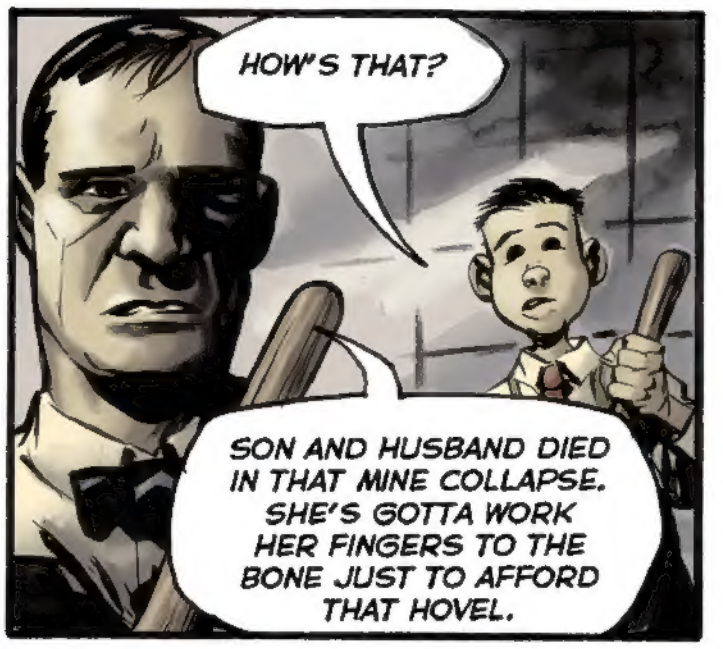
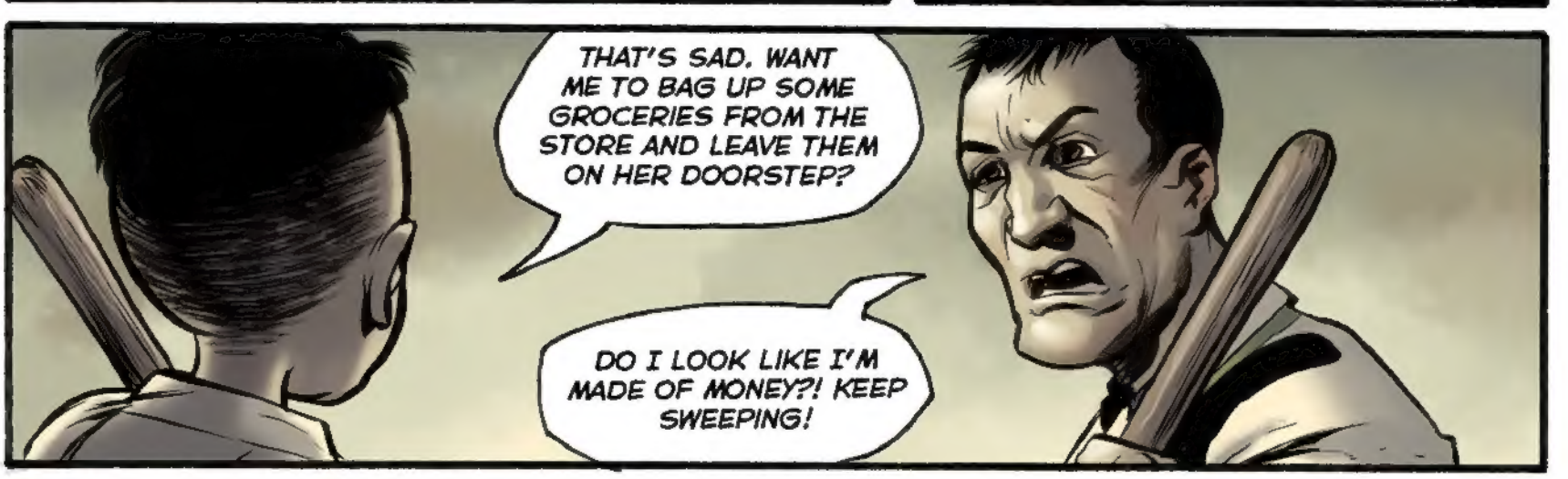
BEANS

GROCERY

POOR OLD WOMAN.


HOW'S THAT?
SON AND HUSBAND DIED IN THAT MINE COLLAPSE. SHE'S GOTTA WORK HER FINGERS TO THE BONE JUST TO AFFORD THAT HOVEL.


THAT'S SAD. WANT ME TO BAG UP SOME GROCERIES FROM THE STORE AND LEAVE THEM ON HER DOORSTEP?
DO I LOOK LIKE I'M MADE OF MONEY?! KEEP SWEEPING!

PENTAGRAM GIRDLE FACTORY

FIRE MARSHAL

THESE CONDITIONS ARE UNACCEPTABLE.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! THIS FACTORY IS SOLID AS THEY COME!

THE STRUCTURE IS FINE. IT'S FIRE SAFETY THAT'S THE PROBLEM. YOU'VE GOT NO WORKING SPRINKLERS--

THE PIPES LEAKED! YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH IT WOULD COST TO FIX THEM?!

YOU'VE GOT NO FIRE ESCAPES--

HA! THAT WOULD COST MORE THAN FIXING THE LEAKY SPRINKLER PIPES!

ALL THE EXITS AND STAIRWELLS ARE BLOCKED! THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE UPPER FLOORS IS A TINY SERVICE ELEVATOR!

LOOK, THESE WOMEN I EMPLOY ARE FOREIGNERS AND GHETTO TRASH FOR THE MOST PART. THEY'LL STEAL ANYTHING THAT'S NOT NAILED DOWN.

GOING IN AND OUT OF ONE EXIT WHERE MY FOREMAN CAN KEEP AN EYE ON THEM IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN MAKE SURE THEY AREN'T ROBBING ME OUT OF HOUSE AND HOME!

WHY, EVERY ONE OF THEM WOULD BE STROLLING OUT OF HERE WITH A BOLT OF FABRIC UNDER THEIR ARM IF WE WEREN'T WATCHING!

$1

BUT IF YOU EVER HAD A FIRE--

WHY WOULD WE EVER HAVE A FIRE?! WE AREN'T SMELTING LEAD IN HERE! WE'RE SEWING GIRDLES!

TAP TAP

COTTON BATTING

BOTTOM LINE... AM I BREAKING ANY LAWS HERE?

WELL, NO.

YOUR FACTORY ISN'T POSING A FIRE THREAT TO THE SURROUNDING BUILDINGS, AND THERE AREN'T ANY MANDATORY REGULATIONS FOR SPRINKLERS OR FIRE ESCAPES, BUT DON'T YOU CARE ABOUT THE SAFETY OF YOUR WORKERS?

OF COURSE I CARE! IF I WERE TO MAKE ALL THESE CHANGES YOU SUGGEST, I'D HAVE TO LAY OFF WORKERS TO BALANCE OUT THE COST AND KEEP THE PROFIT MARGIN UP! DO YOU WANT ME TO PUT PEOPLE OUT OF A JOB?

I'D ALSO HAVE TO CHARGE MORE FOR MY PRODUCT TO JUSTIFY THE COST OF ALL THESE UNNEEDED SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS! THAT MEANS THE CUSTOMER WOULD SUFFER! DO YOU THINK THAT'S FAIR?!

RATHER THAN FIRING PEOPLE AND RAISING COSTS, COULDN'T YOU TAKE A LITTLE LESS PROFIT FOR YOURSELF AND MAKE SOME OF THESE CHANGES?

ARE YOU KIDDING?! I BARELY MAKE ENOUGH TO GET BY AS IS!

SIR, I HAVE THE CAVIAR, TRUFFLES, AND FRESH LOBSTER FOR YOUR LUNCH TODAY WITH AN EXCELLENT 1811 CHATEAU D'YQUEM.

AGAIN? WELL, I SUPPOSE THAT WILL DO.

YOU'RE A FINE FIRE MARSHALL, BUT YOU SIMPLY DON'T UNDERSTAND BUSINESS.

PAT PAT

NOW WHY DON'T YOU JOIN ME FOR LUNCH WHILE WE DISCUSS MY CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR NEXT CAMPAIGN!

I'M TIRED OF EIGHTEEN-HOUR DAYS IN THIS SWEATSHOP! I WANT TO MOVE UP TO THE SECRETARIAL POOL! THOSE BROADS GOT IT EASY!

AND JUST HOW DO YOU PLAN TO DO THAT?! YOU CAN'T EVEN TYPE!

THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY!

OH, MR. FOREMAN. I THINK I NEED HELP IN THE, AHEM, STORAGE BUILDING.

I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!

YOU PEOPLE AIN'T GOING NOWHERE IN THE NEXT FIFTEEN MINUTES ANYWAY!

OW!

TACOS

TACOS! TACOS FOR SALE!

HEY! THIS TACO HAD A BEER TAB IN IT!

THAT'S A LIE! NO BEER TABS IN MY TACOS!

SERVE ME LOUSY BEER-TAB TACOS AND CALL ME A LIAR TO BOOT! I'LL SHOW YOU!

BUMP!

TACOS

DELIVERIES

TACOS

DO YOU SMELL SMOKE!?

FIRE!

THE DOORS ARE LOCKED!

HELP! LET US OUT!

ON THE 8TH FLOOR.

OH, MY LORD!

QUICKLY, LADIES, TO THE ELEVATOR! THE BUILDING IS ON FIRE!

SNAP!

STAY CALM. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK UP WITH THE ELEVATOR TO FETCH ANOTHER--

HOW WILL WE GET DOWN?! HELP! SOMEONE HELP!

THE SMOKE! COUGH! COUGH! THE SMOKE IS GETTING IN!

I DON'T WANT TO BE BURNED!

MY BABIES! I HAVE BABIES AT HOME! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!

FIRE! FIRE! THE GIRDLE FACTORY IS ON FIRE!

PENTAGRAM GIRDLE FACTORY

WHAT THE... OH NO!

LET US OUT! LET US OUT! WE'RE BURNING!

JUST A MINUTE! JUST A MINUTE!

NO!

OUT OF THE WAY!

COUGH! COUGH!

GAH!

JOE, MY DEAR JOE. I LOVE YOU.

DEAR GOD. THEY'RE JUMPING.

THIRTY-TWO PEOPLE SURVIVED. 142 PERISHED IN THE BLAZE OR THREW THEMSELVES FROM THE WINDOWS TO DIE ON THE PAVEMENT BELOW.

PUBLIC OUTRAGE COMPELLED THE GOVERNMENT TO HOLD A TRIAL, BUT LITTLE JUSTICE CAME FROM IT.

I HAD INSPECTED THE FACTORY EARLIER THAT VERY DAY...

I FOUND NOTHING OUT OF PLACE.

MR. BLANK, IF YOU AND YOUR COMPANY ARE NOT AT FAULT FOR THESE DEATHS, THEN WHO IS?

CLEARLY IT WAS THE FAULT OF THE WORKERS FOR NOT FOLLOWING THE STRICT SAFETY PROTOCOLS WE HAD IN PLACE.

THEY WOULD HAVE ALL GOTTEN OUT ALIVE IF THEY SIMPLY HAD BEEN ABLE TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS.

HARRISON BLANK WAS ACQUITTED OF ALL CHARGES AND ENDED UP MAKING A SUBSTANTIAL PROFIT FROM THE FIRE OFF THE INSURANCE MONEY.

RE-OPENING

PILLAR OF THE COMMUNITY

WE THE PEOPLE!

HERO

GRAM

768-J7

9824-K8

FOR RISKING YOUR OWN LIFE SO VALIANTLY TO SAVE OTHERS, I'D LIKE TO PRESENT YOU WITH THIS PLAQUE!

HE THEN STAGED A VERY PUBLIC AWARD CEREMONY FOR HIS FOREMAN, WHICH BEGAN HIS SPIN CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF HIS COMPANY.

THE TACO VENDOR AND THE MAN WHO ASSAULTED HIM WERE SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS APIECE FOR STARTING THE FIRE. THEY COULD NOT AFFORD ATTORNEYS.

ARE WE CANNON FODDER FOR THEIR PROFITS?!

NO!

ARE WE GOING TO SIT BY AND LET THE FAT CATS GET AWAY WITH THESE WORKING CONDITIONS?!

NO!

IT'S TIME FOR THE WORKERS TO UNITE!

HOWEVER, THE SURVIVORS AND THE LOVED ONES OF THE VICTIMS WERE NOT ABOUT TO LET THE MATTER GO WITHOUT A FIGHT.

PICKET LADIES TAILORS STRIKE

PICKET LADIES TAILORS STRIKE

PICKET LADIES TAILORS STRIKE

AND THEY DID, FORMING THE FIRST GARMENT-WORKERS UNION IN THE DISTRICT. THEY MARCHED ON THE PENTAGRAM GIRDLE FACTORY TO ENSURE THE DEATHS OF THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY WOULD NOT BE IN VAIN.

LADY STRIKE TAILORS

LOOK AT THIS TRASH! I CREATE THEIR JOBS AND PUT FOOD ON THEIR TABLES AND THIS IS THE APPRECIATION I'M SHOWN?!

WORK

THEY'RE COSTING ME MONEY. I WANT IT DEALT WITH SWIFTLY AND HARSHLY.

CONSIDER IT DONE.

THE UNION BUSTERS AND THE POLICE, BOTH IN THE POCKET OF BLANK, SHOWED NO MERCY TO MAN, WOMAN, OR CHILD.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT US TO DO?! GO BACK OUT THERE AND GET OUR HEADS BEAT IN?!

YEAH, WE CAN'T FIGHT BLANK'S UNION BUSTERS AND THE COPS! HIS POCKETS ARE TOO DEEP. HE OWNS THE WHOLE SHOW.

MAYBE WHAT WE NEED IS SOME MUSCLE OF OUR OWN!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THE GOON!

HE RUNS THE CONSTRUCTION UNIONS! MAYBE HE'LL RUN OUR UNION FOR US, TOO!

I DON'T WANT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH ANY GANGSTERS!

BUT HE'S A GANGSTER! DO WE REALLY WANT TO GO FROM BEING EXPLOITED BY ONE CROOK TO ANOTHER?!

THE GOON MIGHT BE A THUG, BUT I'D RATHER BE IN BED WITH A THUG THAN BE A SLAVE TO THAT DEVIL WEARING A THREE-PIECE SUIT!

YEAH, FROM WHAT I HEAR, GOON REALLY GOES TO BAT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS! WHAT CAN IT HURT TO TALK TO THE MAN?!

Norton's
PUB

A TAILOR LADIES' UNION, HUH? WE DON'T KNOW NOTHIN' ABOUT THE SEWIN' BUSINESS.
ALL WE'RE REALLY LOOKING FOR IS PROTECTION. HARRISON BLANK HAS THE POLICE AND A GANG OF UNION-BUSTING BRUISERS IN HIS POCKET!

I JUST DON'T--
I READ ABOUT THAT FIRE IN THE PAPER. MY AUNT WORKED IN A FACTORY ONCE.
FRANKY, HAVE 'EM SIGN THE BOOK.

JUST SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE, UNION SISTER.

OH, YOU CAN'T SCARE ME, I'M STICKING TO THE UNION! I'M STICKING TO THE UNION 'TIL THE DAY I DIE!

I THOUGHT WE POUNDED ENOUGH SENSE INTO YOU PEOPLE?!
GET OUTTA HERE OR YOU'LL GET MORE OF THE SAME!

NO! YOU KILLED MY MOMMA! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO KILL ANY MORE MOMMAS!

I SAID GET OUTTA--

YOU WAS SAYIN'?

I-I-I--

Y-YU BWOKE MUH JAW!

WELL, IT'S BETTER THAN BEIN' BURNED ALIVE, AIN'T IT?

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU COPS DOIN' HERE?! THIS IS A UNION MATTER AND I BELIEVE YOU'RE GETTIN' ENOUGH KICKBACKS TO KNOW BETTER THAN TO STICK YOUR NOSES IN A UNION MATTER!

OH, AND I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF TAKING SOME CANDID PHOTOS AT THE BROTHEL LAST NIGHT.

THAT'S A GOOD ONE OF YOU, CALLAHAN. WHAT IS THAT SHOVED UP YER REAR? AN UMBRELLA? THAT'D LOOK MIGHTY ARTISTIC SPLASHED ON THE SOCIAL SECTION OF THE PAPERS!

W-WE DIDN'T KNOW THIS WAS ONE OF YOUR UNIONS, GOON. APOLOGIES, LADIES.

YES, OUR APOLOGIES. GOOD DAY TO YOU LADIES.

WELL?! YOU GOT ANY SACK OR ARE YA JUST GOOD FOR BEATIN' ON WOMEN AND KIDS?!

LET'S MARCH!!

Emerald Country Club

AND THAT'S HOW I MADE TWENTY-FIVE MILLION WITHOUT PAYING TAXES OR BENEFITS TO MY WORKERS!

BWA-HA-HA-HA-HA!!

I HEAR YOU'RE HAVING A LITTLE UNION TROUBLE, BLANK.

HAD A BIT OF A CONFLICT WITH UNIONS MYSELF, OLD BOY. GIVE THIS FELLOW A CALL. A QUITE UNPLEASANT LITTLE MAN, BUT HE WORKED WONDERS FOR ME.

MR. CORPUS
WITCHCRAFT AND CHICANERY SERVICES FOR HIRE

YOU DON'T SAY...

SIR, A MR. CORPUS HERE TO SEE YOU.

PLEASURE TO MEET--

HYSSSH! DO YOU HAVE MY MONEY?!

R-RIGHT HERE. THE PROBLEM I HAVE IS--

BLAH! BLAH! BLAH! MR. BLANK, ARE YOU CONCERNED WITH YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL?

M-MY SOUL? UH, WELL, HAVEN'T GIVEN THE MATTER MUCH THOUGHT.

YOU.

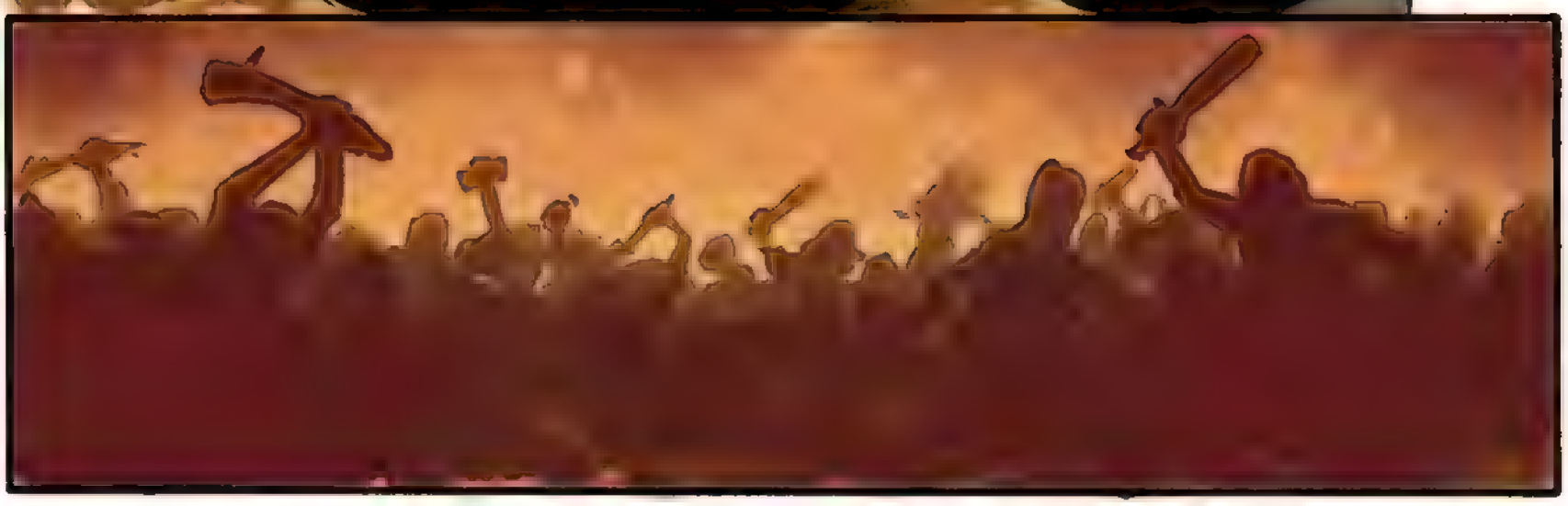
GOOD! MAKES THIS EASIER. I JUST NEED THREE DROPS OF BLOOD AND A STOOL SAMPLE.

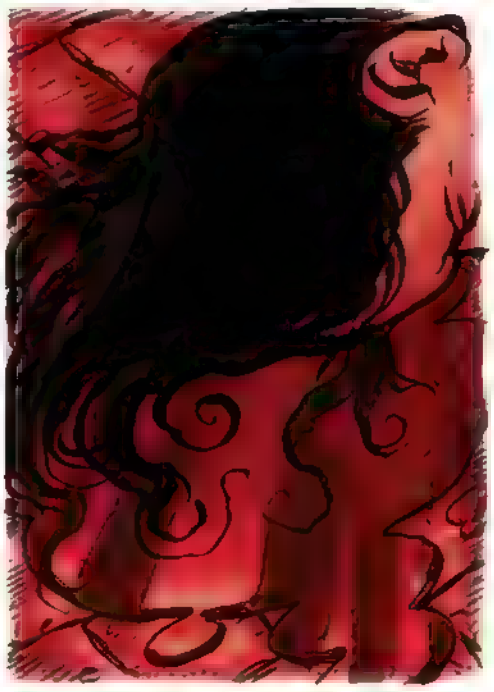
STOOL?

SEMEN WILL WORK, TOO.

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!

WELL, FROM THE LOOKS OF 'IM... I'D SAYS IT'S SOME KIND OF DE-MONIC GO-RILLA.





FOOLS.
RISE UP. CAUSE A RUCKUS. YOU WON'T CHANGE A DAMN THING AND TOMORROW YOU'LL JUST BE CRAWLING BACK TO ME. WHERE ELSE ARE YOU GOING TO FIND WORK?

YOU WANT JUSTICE? THERE IS NO JUSTICE FOR YOU. YOU ARE THE COGS IN THE WHEEL.

JUSTICE IS BOUGHT AND PAID FOR BY YOUR SUPERIORS. WHEN YOU ANIMALS START TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THAT, ALL OF US WILL BE BETTER OFF.

FOOLS.

I'M NO FOOL, MR. BLANK.

WHA--HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?!

YOU'RE RIGHT, MR. BLANK. THERE IS NO JUSTICE... FOR THE LIVING.

BUT I DIED IN YOUR FIRE. AND MY SON AND HUSBAND BOTH DIED WORKING IN YOUR MINE.

AND I WILL HAVE JUSTICE.

END

"Just remember this, Mr. Potter, that this rabble you're talking about . . . they do most of the working and paying and living and dying in this community."

—George Bailey

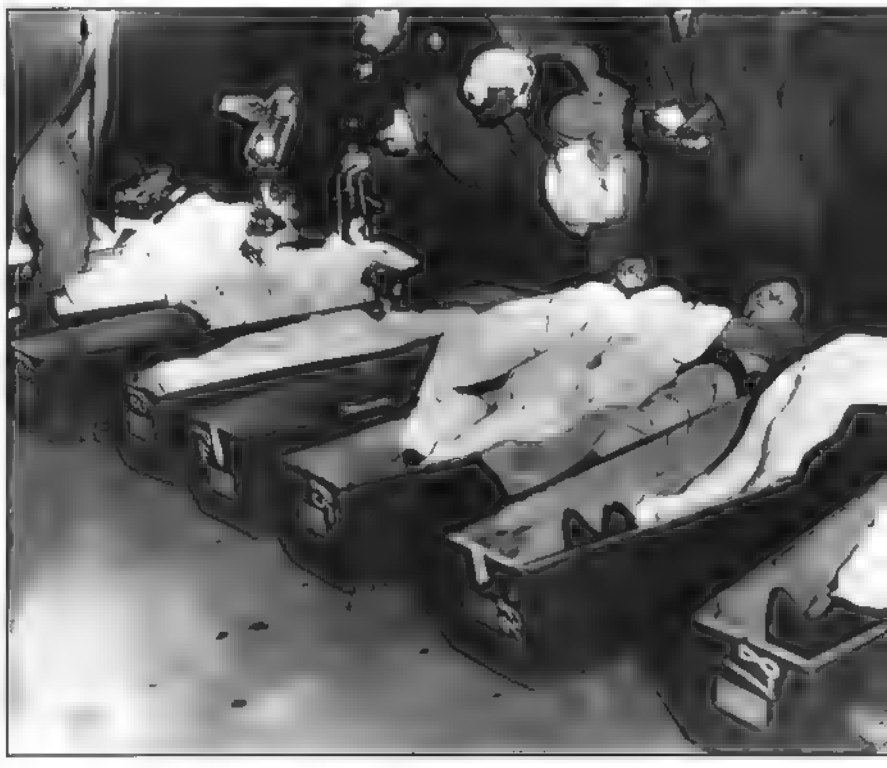
"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

—George Santayana

After issue #15, I wanted to do another union story at some point down the road. The dynamic of organized crime involved in a movement whose core value is to protect the rights of the little guy really intrigues me. But I needed the right angle to touch on the topic again. All of the recent news about the unions being stripped of rights in Wisconsin, the greed-driven safety cuts that led to the BP oil spill, and, well, the last decade of crap that's happened to this country due to avarice gave me a little motivation to do an EC Comics–style story about the greedy getting what's coming to them. Then I caught a documentary about the Triangle Shirtwaist fire of 1911. It was the final bit of inspiration I needed.

On March 25, 1911, 146 people, mostly women and teenage girls, died when a fire broke out on the eighth floor of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Years of ignored pleas for improved fire safety and virtually no safety regulations to speak of (no sprinkler systems, an inadequate fire escape, a locked exit) led to the disaster. More than ninety people were trapped on the ninth floor and leaped to their deaths rather than face the flames.

The broken and burned remains of the victims were lined up for identification as the procession of family members walked past the horrid scene to identify their loved ones. Some of the charred remains had to be identified by bits of jewelry and clothing.



No one was held accountable for the poor conditions that led to the tragedy, and the owners actually made a profit off the insurance, and continued business as usual. But the public outcry over the images of dead workers crumpled on the street gave the unions the leverage they needed to finally push workers' rights on industry. It was the straw that broke the camel's back in this country and led to a wave of change that provided the more humane and safer work environments that most take for granted today.

Next page: a Goon *pinup by Joshua Covey, followed by a preview of* Ragemoor *#1 by Jan Strnad and Richard Corben. ON SALE MARCH 21.*

Covey
11

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. CASTLE RAGEMOOR IS A *LIVING BEING.* IT HAS A *HEART* AND A *MIND!*

IF IT HAS A *SOUL,* I HAVE YET TO *DISCOVER* IT!

POPPYCOCK.

STONES AND TIMBER, THAT'S ALL IT IS. A CONSTRUCTION OF COLD STONE AND DEAD WOOD!

RAGEMOOR WAS NOT *BUILT*, UNCLE. IT WAS *CONCEIVED*.

"THE FIRST STONES WERE LAID THREE THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST!

"PAGAN *SLAVES* HEWED THE ROCK FROM THE QUARRY! THE STONES RODE ON PAGAN *BLOOD* TO THE COUNTRYSIDE WHERE THEY WERE LAID!

"PAGAN *SWEAT* BLED INTO THE GROUND AS THE STONES WERE RAISED INTO POSITION!

"IN TIME, ***PRIESTLY*** BLOOD JOINED WITH THAT OF THE SACRIFICES. RAGEMOOR ***GREW*** WITH A NEW VIGOR--

"--ELEMENTAL AND RELENTLESS--

"--INEXORABLE--

"--***MONOLITHIC!***

"OVER THE CENTURIES, THROUGH NO EFFORT OF MAN, ***CASTLE RAGEMOOR*** BECAME THE MONUMENT IT IS TODAY--

"--A MONUMENT TO ***EVIL!***"

MY...HOW DELICIOUS A TALE.

DARK HORSE
DECEMBER 2011

HORSEPOWER

My first thought, when Dark Horse asked me if I wanted to write the comic-book version of Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan's novel *The Strain*, was "You had me at Guillermo." Actually, my first thought was "Does this require reading?" but that's not very writerlike of me, so forget I said that. I'd even delete it, but I have a word count to reach.

I first encountered Guillermo's work back in the mid-1990s through Miramax's Dimension label. They had given me a poorly dubbed, blurry videotape of a film from this great young director, Guillermo del Toro. The film was *Cronos* (which bears a few thematic similarities to our new comic book), and I've been a fan ever since.

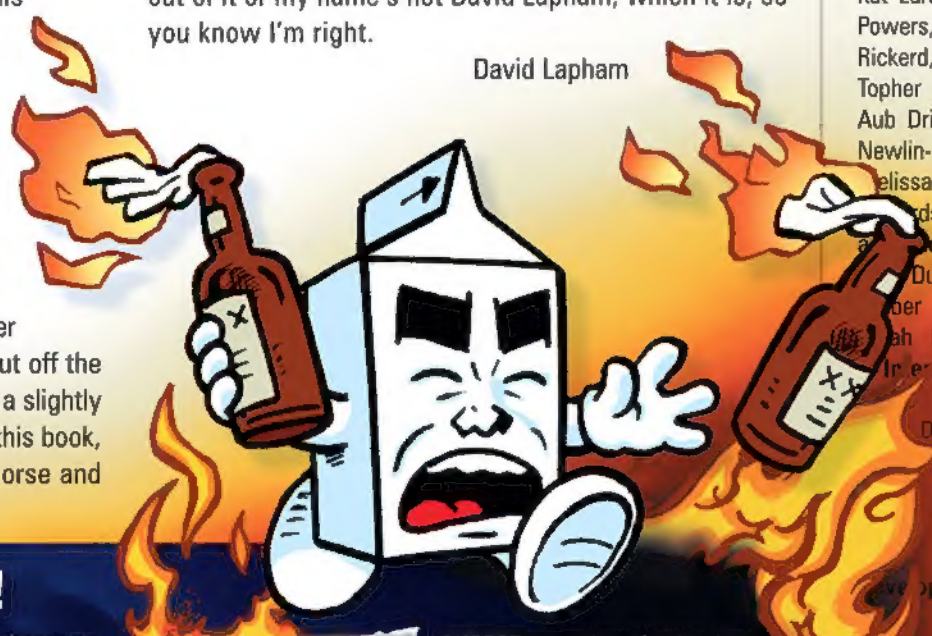
Based on that you might say that I am like a father to Guillermo, proudly watching as he has built his amazing career. You might say that, but that would make you a crazy person.

Let's go back to this reading thing. I feel I must explain this, or you'll all think less of me. I am what you would call a sleepy reader, meaning I am one who falls asleep when I read. I enjoy reading immensely, and every night before bed, I pick up my book and start reading . . . Then BAM the book hits me in the face. My wife rolls her eyes and tells me to put the book down and shut off the lights, and we both try to forget she's married to a slightly silly man. So I was a little paranoid that reading this book, *The Strain*, would take me months and Dark Horse and Guillermo would fire me, and I would be asleep the whole time and not even know I was fired and end up spending all this time writing the series and not get paid for it because my checks would be going to another writer whom I would bear a secret resentment toward forever.

However, I took the leap because of Guillermo and because the amazing Mike Huddleston was signed on to draw it, and what I discovered is that if you read when you're not tired, you can stay awake! And . . . we have *The Strain*, a vampire tale like no other. A vampire tale for those who like their vampires full of blood instead of angst, and their themes hurtling toward global doomsday.

What I would like to leave you with, dear readers (I've always wanted to write that: "dear readers"), is the reason why, even though you've read the book, you should read the comic book. (And it's not the threatening chain letter I sent you.) It's because this is the comic book *The Strain*, not the novel, not the illustrated CliffsNotes of the novel. This is David Lapham and Mike Huddleston's version of *The Strain*. Guillermo and Chuck Hogan wanted to get creators they liked on the book and then see what we could do. You're going to love the bejesus out of it or my name's not David Lapham, which it is, so you know I'm right.

David Lapham



DARK HORSE HEROES!

MILK, a carton of hate, born out of the dairy depths of New Jersey on a mission to create anarchy and consume large quantities of gin. He's not antisocial . . . he's anti-everything!

CHEESE, a wedge of spite, born out of the . . . Oh $#!%! *They're loose!!!*

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THE GOON™

ISSUE THIRTY-SEVEN

ERIC POWELL
DAVE STEWART

CELEBRATING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

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